

▼ Gay Pride Month ▼



Gore Vidal

The American writer, Gore Vidal, born in West Point, N.Y. on Oct 3, 1925, has been a prolific writer, best known for his historical novels, and is a well respected though often unheeded essayist. However, the publication of **The City and the Pillar** in 1948 caused a profound change in the life of its author, Gore Vidal. Still in his early twenties, with two previous novels and a growing critical reputation, Vidal was one of the hottest writers of the new post-war generation. Meanwhile, his grandfather, the former Senator T.P. Gore, was quietly arranging for Vidal to be elected to his first political office. But reaction to the novel completely derailed Vidal's potential career in politics (though he subsequently ran for office twice), and knocked his literary career off track for over a decade and a half. The critical response to the book was so merciless that for six years the New York Times had a standing policy not to review any novels by Vidal. What so infuriated the critics yet aroused public interest enough to turn the novel into a best seller? *The City and the Pillar* depicts a homosexual encounter between two young, all-American athletic types, and the torch that one carries for the other.

Fifty years later it may seem difficult to understand the scandal this novel spawned, but Vidal challenged the sexual stereotypes of post-war America by discussing sexual attraction and activity between men without portraying it as an aberration. He spoke plainly and openly about the regularity with which such things took place in Hollywood, in New York, and in the armed forces, and that proved monumentally controversial.